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***NEWS From:***

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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For Immediate Release

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Contact: Ruben Pulido Jr.

202.225.3327 [ruben.pulido@mail.house.gov](mailto:ruben.pulido@mail.house.gov)

**Rep. Honda Mourns Death of Eddie ‘Gwen’ Araujo, Urges  
Congress to Pass Stalled Hate Crime Legislation**

“I am shocked and saddened by the brutal murder of Eddie ‘Gwen’ Araujo, a 17-year old Bay Area youth. On October 3, 2002 Araujo was viciously beaten and strangled, thrown in the back of a truck, and buried in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Accounts indicate the attack and murder were motivated by Araujo’s perceived sexual orientation.

“Years before his tragic death, friends say Araujo was regularly subjected to anti-gay slurs, and endured frequent taunting for the way he acted and dressed. Such harassment caused Araujo to be so uncomfortable at school that he was forced to transfer from one high school to another, subsequently ceasing all efforts to attend school. Despite this intolerance, Araujo planned to obtain his GED and enroll in beauty school. He dreamed of becoming a makeup artist in Hollywood.

“My heart goes out to Araujo’s family, and those who have suffered personal losses from such senseless crimes of hatred. The fact that a brutal killing can be motivated by discrimination based on an individual’s sexual orientation underscores the importance of full federal protections to prevent these tragic acts of violence. I call upon Congress to redouble its effort to pass the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (H.R. 1343), which would expand federal jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute serious, violent hate crimes based on the actual or perceived sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or disability of the victim. H.R. 1343 is an important measure to prevent the kind of senseless violence that has sadly taken the life of Araujo, and has generated enormous grief in the Bay Area, and this country.”